

Message

From: Slater, Zachary [slater.zachary@epa.gov]
Sent: 8/31/2015 4:42:03 PM
To: Cooper, Destinee [COOPER.DESTINEE@EPA.GOV]
Subject: RE: FYI for ESC BU: 12th Floor Indoor Air. AFGE's email to EPA management.

Hi Destinee,

I don't know how much interaction the unions have with one another, but I just wanted to point out that last week Dr. Harrison said there are no long-term effects associated with exposure to raised levels of caprolactam. While the impact to workplace productivity is a valid concern, I believe AFGE expressing the concern regarding "long-term impacts on our health" is disingenuous and only serves to perpetuate an atmosphere of fear and paranoia regarding the indoor air quality. There *are* long term health impacts if exposed to formaldehyde at higher levels over the course of a career, but it's my understanding that the formaldehyde levels are now at an acceptable level; still elevated, but within the acceptable range.

Another questionable act was the recent health survey sent out by the union and reported by NTEU, which appeared to intentionally distort the facts. It was a logical fallacy to assume direct correlation between health symptoms experienced by EPA personnel and the exposure to the COCs, yet that is exactly what the union did with the survey and the reporting of preliminary results. Normal seasonal allergies and daily exposure to public transportation could have just as easily been culprits, however NTEU chose to ignore all other possible causes and place the blame solely on the indoor air. NTEU took their faulty logic one step further by saying "the problem is far more widespread than management has ever reported," insinuating management is intentionally withholding information at the expense of employees' health.

At this point, only caprolactam remains at an unacceptable level where short-term health effects may be experienced, however the issue is being actively addressed. Put 20 healthy people in a room and tell them there are high levels of chemicals that could adversely affect their health, regardless of whether that's true, and I guarantee at least 5 of those people start developing symptoms. Management appears to be actively working to reduce the levels of caprolactam and they're accommodating employees claiming adverse effects, but union emails exaggerating the effects and situation isn't doing anyone any good. I value our unions and the purpose they serve, however, based on the most recent emails put forth by the unions, I feel there is an unnecessary attack on management and the truth is being distorted to further the divide between employees and management.

Sincerely,

Zack Slater
Contracting Officer
Management and Technical Services, MTS-4-3
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
Voice: 415-972-3670
Email: slater.zachary@epa.gov

From: Cooper, Destinee
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2015 2:06 PM
To: Sims, Mark
Cc: Chan, Patrick; Estrada, Thelma
Subject: FYI for ESC BU: 12th Floor Indoor Air. AFGE's email to EPA management.

This email is an FYI for ESC's bargaining unit.

Destinee Cooper
ESC EPA Vice-President
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
T: 415-972-3790

NOTE: *If you aren't a union member, pay period dues are \$5 (\$130 or \$135/year depending on the number of pay periods). Please sign up by contacting Rich Frietas (4121-A), Destinee Cooper (09135), Mark Sims (14219), or attending the weekly union meetings. *Weekly union meetings are on Wednesdays from 12-1pm in the Saguaro Room.

From: Chan, Patrick
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2015 10:44 AM
To: Chan, Patrick
Cc: Sims, Mark; Dreyfus, Bethany; Estrada, Thelma
Subject: FW: 12th Floor Indoor Air. AFGE's email to EPA management.

This email goes to union members and bargaining unit employees in NTEU Chapter 295. Below is an email from Thelma Estrada, President, AFGE Local 1236, and Bethany Dreyfus, AFGE Representative to senior management team commenting on management's proposed plans to address Indoor Air Quality issues. If you have any questions on this email, please feel free to call me at 415-972-3551.

Thanks,
Patrick Chan
NTEU Chapter 295

From: Estrada, Thelma
This is what AFGE sent out, commenting on the Indoor Air Quality Milestones Management sent to the Unions.
Thelma

From: Dreyfus, Bethany
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2015 1:04 PM
To: McIlwain, Serena; WARREN, CARL
Subject: 12th Floor Indoor Air

Thank you for providing Region 9 Management's Indoor Air Quality Milestones. We appreciate work being done to evaluate the building's ventilation and the information sessions with Dr. Harrison this morning. We are writing to make sure that specific concerns with regard to indoor air quality on the 12th floor are considered in the upcoming evaluation of building ventilation.

Understandably, for the Phase 1 floors, there is a focus on the 10th floor because of the number of immediately impacted employees, whereas most of the 12th floor has not been impacted in that same way. However, several employees from each of the areas on the 12th floor have complained of irritation from the indoor air since moving onto the floor (see March 30 email attached). Importantly, we are very concerned about the indoor air on the 12th floor since some of the highest levels of caprolactam found in the building to date have been from the single sample taken in a 12th floor office location. Because the levels found in that location were elevated even after over 5 months of building ventilation with additional flushing for some period of time, there may be similar, and potentially much higher, levels in other areas of the office that may not have been sampled yet that are persisting on our floor. We are concerned that, because these chemicals remain persistent above levels of health concern, they could have long-term impacts on our health as well as our workplace productivity.

We understand that there will be HVAC evaluation for the 10th floor to determine whether outdoor air is in fact coming into that floor overall. Because it is on a separate system, we would like this information for the 12th floor, and specifically we would like to know whether the outdoor air is in fact reaching all of the 12th floor HVAC zones. We do not think that this evaluation should be contingent upon what is found for the 10th floor, as the information gleaned about the 10th floor may or may not be relevant to our system on 12. We understand there to be approximately 30 HVAC zones on our floor, and many offices on 12 may be differentially ventilated. Accordingly, we would like the 12th floor HVAC system to be evaluated along with the 10th floor so that our particular ventilation patterns can be better understood and adjusted as necessary.

We do appreciate the increased 3 hours of ventilation on Monday morning prior to the beginning of the business day. However, it is not clear that this alone will resolve the problem and bring down the persistent levels of caprolactam and formaldehyde. Importantly, sampling will be necessary to see whether those levels are actually decreasing. Although we are not confident that an additional 5% ventilation time per week will accomplish reduction of chemical levels, we are willing to see if that is sufficient as long as its efficacy is confirmed with sampling.

Based on these concerns, AFGE would like the following to be added to the indoor air management milestones:

- Additional tube sampling (as noted in Process and Communication Step 6) should include 12th floor locations to determine which areas other than the single tested office may still have elevated chemical concentrations. Specifically, offices other than the one tested should be added as well as at least 1 location on the north side of the 12th floor where the first elevated level was discovered and one on each of the south and west sides which have never been tested but have reported impacts. Sampling should be conducted in at least 1 location in each of the following areas:
 - In an office in the cluster of offices on the north-east side of the floor (12141-12144);
 - Along the northern corridor (Open Office 12160-12170) where elevated caprolactam levels were measured in January;
 - Along the southern corridor (Open Office 12360-12370) where sampling has not yet been conducted; and
 - In the northwest area of the office (Open Office 12410) where sampling has not yet been conducted.
- Ensure that increased 3 hours of HVAC operation on Monday mornings (Ventilation Task 1) is having a measurable difference in reducing levels by conducting appropriately-timed confirmation sampling.
- Along with the 10th floor, evaluate whether outdoor air is reaching all areas of the 12th floor (Ventilation Task 3).
- Conduct independent evaluation of 12th floor HVAC to ensure proper operation in all HVAC zones to ensure flushing is occurring (Ventilation Task 4).

Please let us know if you have any questions about what it is we are seeking.

Thank you.

Bethany Dreyfus

AFGE Representative for Indoor Air Issues